United Nations S/2002/1353

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 December 2002

Original: English

Interim report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Angola

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1433 (2002) of 15 August 2002, by which the Council established the United Nations Mission in Angola (UNMA) as a follow-on mission to the United Nations Office in Angola, and requested me to provide an interim report on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. This report summarizes key developments in Angola since my report of 26 July 2002 (S/2002/834). It describes the Mission's activities in the political, military, human rights, child protection, humanitarian and development fields, and identifies continuing challenges to the consolidation of peace in Angola.

II. Political developments

2. The period under review witnessed a number of significant political developments, in particular, the end of the armed conflict; the subsequent signing of the Memorandum of Commitment between the Government of Angola and the União National para a Indepêndencia Total de Angola (UNITA) on the remaining tasks under the Lusaka Protocol; the efforts of UNITA to unite and transform itself into a political party; and the completion of the work of the Joint Commission.

3. During my visit to Angola from 25 to 27 August 2002, I met with the President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, members of his Government, the UNITA leadership and civil society groups. I held discussions on a number of key issues, particularly the continuing contribution of the United Nations to the consolidation of peace in the country. I also had the opportunity to witness at first hand the grave humanitarian situation facing Angola when I visited a camp for internally displaced persons in Viana, a suburb of Luanda. My visit also coincided with the signing of the Memorandum of Commitment during a special session of the Joint Commission, which I attended on 26 August 2002. Following the usual consultations, including with the Government of Angola, I appointed Mr. Ibrahim Gambari as my Special Representative for Angola and Chairman of the re-established Joint Commission.

End of the armed conflict

4. It should be recalled that the protracted armed conflict between the Government of Angola and UNITA came to an end with the signing, on 4 April

02-72211 (E) 121202

2002, of the Memorandum of Understanding: Addendum to the Lusaka Protocol for the Cessation of Hostilities and the Implementation of the Outstanding Military Issues under the Lusaka Protocol. There have been no reported violations of the ceasefire since that date. On 3 August, the Government of Angola declared that about 80,000 UNITA ex-combatants had been quartered, disarmed and demobilized in 41 reception areas, together with approximately 300,000 dependants. The Angolan Armed Forces indicated that they had collected most weapons from UNITA ex-combatants and that the locations of UNITA arms caches had been identified. On 2 August, the Government of Angola declared that the disarmament and disbanding of UNITA armed forces was complete. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, 5,007 UNITA ex-combatants are being integrated into the national army and 40 UNITA personnel are being inducted into the police. In addition, 658 foreign ex-combatants from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who were disarmed and demobilized along with 253 of their dependants, are currently awaiting repatriation.

5. The Joint Military Commission, which was established under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding to oversee the pending military aspects, supervised and monitored the quartering, disarmament and demobilization process. Eight United Nations military liaison officers participated as observers in the work of the Commission and its central and regional technical groups, together with military observers from the three observer States to the peace process (Portugal, Russian Federation, and United States of America). The Joint Military Commission was renamed the Military Commission following the integration of UNITA military personnel into the national army and is responsible for monitoring the overall reintegration, reinsertion and resettlement phase of the demobilization process, including the provision of security and the distribution of food and medicines. It is also responsible for monitoring demining activities, as well as the identification and destruction of remaining weapons caches in the country. The Military Commission is expected to remain in session until the completion of the process of resettlement of ex-combatants.

Signing of the Memorandum of Commitment

6. With the military aspects of the peace process formally concluded, the Government of Angola and UNITA moved towards implementing the remaining political tasks under the Protocol. According to the Memorandum of Commitment for the Final Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, signed on 26 August 2002, the parties agreed to implement, within a 45-day time frame, the following remaining tasks under the Lusaka Protocol: national reconciliation, including the social reintegration of UNITA ex-combatants; allocation of facilities for UNITA and residences for the party leadership; submission of UNITA's nominees for positions in a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and the public service; establishment of UNITA as a political party and reinstating the status of the leader of the largest opposition party; review of the symbols of the Republic of Angola; and the electoral process.

7. In accordance with the Memorandum of Commitment, the Joint Commission on the Peace Process in Angola was re-established under the chairmanship of my Special Representative and composed of representatives of the Government of Angola and UNITA, and of the three observer States (the "Troika"), to facilitate and verify the implementation of the remaining tasks of the Lusaka Protocol.

Reunification and transformation of UNITA

8. It will be recalled that Paulo Lukamba "Gato" assumed the function of Coordinator of the Management Commission of UNITA senior officials, which was established in February 2002. Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 4 April, the UNITA leadership began its efforts to unify the various factions of the movement. After some three months of negotiations between UNITA-Renovada, led by Eugênio Ngolo Manuvakola, and the Management Commission of UNITA, under the leadership of Paulo Lukamba "Gato", major steps were taken towards the reunification of the party. On 30 July the leader of UNITA–Renovada resigned and, on 6 August, the Management Commission was replaced by a political commission composed of 60 members. In order to accommodate the concerns of some ex-UNITA-Renovada elements, this commission was expanded to 250 members on 4 October. On 2 November, the Head of UNITA's "external mission", Isaias Samakuva, returned to Angola to assume his responsibilities in the area of electoral affairs within the political commission. On 8 October, UNITA swore in its newly reunified political commission at the National Assembly in Luanda, formally marking the inauguration of UNITA as a unified political party. On 15 October, the Angolan National Assembly opened its 10th legislative session, during which Jerônimo Wanga was elected leader of the UNITA parliamentary group, the largest opposition party in the Assembly. In his opening speech, Mr. Wanga reaffirmed UNITA's commitment to genuine peace in Angola.

9. UNITA has since moved into a new national headquarters in Luanda, allocated to it by the Government. On 5 November, the Political Commission met to discuss the normalization of its political activities, in particular its expansion into the provinces. Subsequently, on 19 November, the Government of Angola declared that legal conditions had been fulfilled for all political parties, including UNITA, to operate freely throughout the country.

III. Activities of the Mission and the United Nations in support of the consolidation of peace in Angola

10. Under its resolution 1433 (2002), the Security Council mandated the Mission to undertake a number of tasks to finalize the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and consolidate peace in Angola. To provide the necessary leadership to the process, I requested my Special Representative to proceed to Luanda, where he arrived on 14 September. Under his guidance, the Mission has successfully conducted activities in nearly all the areas of responsibility entrusted to it, including the conclusion of the work of the Joint Commission; participation as an observer in the Military Commission; and promotion of human rights. The Mission is also coordinating all aspects of humanitarian assistance, particularly the provision of food and medicines, through the concerned United Nations agencies.

11. It will be recalled that, under resolution 1433 (2002), the Security Council mandated my Special Representative to oversee a coordinated and integrated approach to the United Nations activities in Angola. To this end, my Special Representative has worked closely with the country team, as well as with the agencies, funds, programmes and implementing partners that deliver and support national efforts aimed at institution-building and full extension of governance throughout the territory of Angola. The Deputy Special Representative and

Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator in Angola also served as a member of the United Nations delegation to the Joint Commission on the Peace Process and contributed to its work, especially in the discussions on the humanitarian situation in the country.

Joint Commission on the Peace Process

12. A significant challenge in the past had been the high level of mistrust between the parties to the Lusaka Protocol, which repeatedly led to the breakdown of the peace process. The Joint Commission was therefore established to serve as a mechanism to ensure a structured dialogue between the parties on key issues and to ensure coordination with international partners, through the facilitation of the United Nations as the chair of the Commission.

13. The substantive work of the re-established Joint Commission, chaired by my Special Representative, commenced on 26 September, prior to which the Mission established a secretariat to facilitate its work. During the first session, it was agreed that the Chairman could hold informal consultations with individuals or groups of representatives outside the Joint Commission to provide information and share views on matters under the consideration of the Commission. During the Commission's second session, the UNITA delegation voiced its concerns over the Government's announcement that it intended to close reception areas for ex-combatants by 15 October 2002, as well as over the delay in providing the State subsidy to which its party was entitled under the law.

14. The Commission's third and fourth sessions focused on national reconciliation. During the third session, held on 14 October, UNITA requested the Government to issue a public statement to confirm that it could operate freely throughout the country as a political party. UNITA also submitted a list of its nominees for government positions to the Chairman. The Government handed over the keys to three houses and two apartments to UNITA, in accordance with the terms of the Memorandum of Commitment.

15. The Government delegation submitted a report on social reintegration for demobilized ex-combatants during the Joint Commission's fifth session, which was held on 24 October. It was also decided to establish a technical sub-group of the Commission, chaired by the Mission, to follow up on resettlement and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. On 30 October, a special session devoted to social reintegration of demobilized combatants was held, during which the Chairman submitted his report on the visit made by the Joint Commission to the reception area at Mimbota, in Bengo Province. At the same time, the Government submitted a statement on the participation of UNITA in some of its organs dealing with social reintegration of demobilized combatants.

16. The sixth session of the Joint Commission was held on 7 and 8 November, during which members reviewed the Chairman's report on his exclusive consultations with a cross section of Angolan society, as well as the report of the technical sub-group on social reintegration of demobilized combatants. During the session, UNITA reiterated its request that the Government issue a statement ensuring that it could operate freely as a political party throughout the country. It also requested the establishment of a post-Joint Commission mechanism to monitor pending tasks and the lifting of remaining sanctions. For its part, the Government delegation agreed to the establishment of a mechanism for the continuation of

bilateral contacts with UNITA, which could include consultations with the United Nations and representatives of the Troika, although not in the same format as the Joint Commission.

17. In accordance with an agreement reached earlier, the final regular session of the Joint Commission was held on 19 and 20 November, during which the Government delegation informed UNITA that a statement confirming its right to operate as a political party had been made. The Joint Commission also signed a declaration proposed by the Government recommending that the Security Council consider the immediate lifting of all sanctions imposed on UNITA.

18. In its final declaration, the Joint Commission determined that the main tasks of the Lusaka Protocol had been concluded and decided to dissolve itself accordingly. The Government and UNITA also committed themselves to honour the agreements reflected in the signed minutes of the sessions of the Joint Commission, pursue the logic of peace in the settlement of disputes, never again to resort to war and to establish a bilateral mechanism to accompany and monitor remaining medium- and long-term tasks. The final report of the Joint Commission was signed on 26 November. Subsequently, the political commissions of the ruling party, Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and UNITA agreed to hold a high-level meeting in early December to discuss strategies concerning issues of national interest.

19. As the Joint Commission proceeded with its work, the Government paid UNITA the first instalment of the state subsidy allocated to it as a political party. It also appointed UNITA nominees as Governors of three of the 18 provinces, seven vice-Governors and six Ambassadors. UNITA also retained its four ministerial and seven vice-ministerial posts previously occupied by UNITA-Renovada. The Government furthermore agreed to greater UNITA participation in the National Commission for the Productive Social Reintegration of Demobilized and Displaced Persons. In addition, upon UNITA's insistence, the Government agreed to consider additional UNITA representation in the Institute for the Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants. However, the Government is yet to make a determination on possible UNITA representation in the National Institute for the Removal of Mines and Unexploded Ordnance.

20. With regard to the aspect of the Lusaka Protocol dealing with the status of UNITA's leader, the Government submitted a document to UNITA on the provision of bodyguards and protocol arrangements. UNITA stated that it would study the document, but noted that a law should be passed to cover this question.

21. In the meantime, both parties agreed that the review of State symbols is to be addressed by the National Assembly. They also agreed that the question of the second round of the presidential elections of 1992 had been superseded by events and that they both looked forward to the next general elections. Underscoring the need for those elections to be free and fair and open to all eligible voters, UNITA requested that the United Nations be actively involved in the process. The Government also requested, in principle, the United Nations to assist in the electoral process, which is now envisaged to take place in 2004.

Coordination of the reintegration and resettlement process

22. The small group of military liaison officers at the Mission, who continue to participate as observers in the Military Commission, have conducted extensive field visits to reception areas. They have also assisted in coordination between the humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the reception areas and officials of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA). The liaison officers have observed that the internal organization and discipline in the reception areas, which is managed by the inhabitants themselves, is adequate. However, the humanitarian and social conditions remain worrisome and the ex-combatants suffer from increasingly low morale. Poor logistics and difficulties in accessing the reception areas are compounded by continued delay in the payment of salaries to ex-combatants and a lack of information concerning the reintegration and social insertion programmes. Many ex-combatants have resorted to other means of earning money, including by serving as paid labour in surrounding areas. This has created a heightened sense of insecurity in some parts of the country and there is concern that demobilized ex-combatants, without means of support, may resort to banditry and theft.

23. The resettlement and reintegration of some 80,000 ex-combatants and their 300,000 dependants, as well as the resettlement of about 4 million internally displaced people will continue to pose an unprecedented challenge for Angola. In this regard, the Government has announced its intention to close all reception areas by 31 December 2002 and has undertaken to fund 50 per cent of the estimated $55 million required to implement a two-year socio-economic reintegration programme. Assistance from the international community will be required to fund the rest of the programme.

24. In this connection, from 28 September to 17 October 2002, the World Bank led a mission to Angola that included the participation of United Nations agencies in the appraisal of the financial, social and environmental aspects of the Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Programme for ex-combatants. The Government has entrusted the Institute for the Socio-Professional Reintegration of Ex-Combatants with the responsibility for overall coordination of the Programme, while United Nations agencies and national and international NGOs would participate as implementing partners to manage the operational aspects of the programme. Funding for the programme is expected to come from the International Development Association, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund associated with the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme and the Government. World Bank discussions on support from the International Development Association for the project are to take place in January 2003. Funding could commence shortly thereafter.

25. It should be noted, however, that the Government initiated the resettlement of ex-combatants in all reception areas as early as October 2002 without adequate consultations with the ex-combatants and without proper distribution of resettlement kits, as previously envisaged. The unorganized resettlement of ex-combatants before ensuring that the areas of resettlement have been cleared of mines and that adequate resources are available to support the returnees, has been a source of tension. In addressing this issue, the Joint Commission's technical sub-group on demobilization, resettlement and reintegration, chaired by the Mission, has conducted preliminary assessment work to ensure that the reintegration process i

comprehensive and consistent with the spirit of the Lusaka Protocol and the Memorandum of Commitment. It has also been tasked with promoting coordination of the planning and implementation of the reintegration of ex-combatants. The technical sub-group presented its recommendations to reduce the gap between execution in the field and the policy level to the Joint Commission.

Human rights aspects

26. Under its resolution 1433 (2002), the Security Council mandated the Mission to assist the Government in the protection and promotion of human rights and in building national institutions to consolidate peace and enhance the rule of law. In order to achieve these objectives, the Mission formulated a six-month strategy, which established provincial human rights task forces in Huambo, Malanje, Kwanza Sul, Moxico, Bié, Uíge and Lunda Sul provinces, prior to the deployment of human rights officers to these provinces. The Mission has also initiated a number of activities, including enhancing Government capacity in the protection of human rights; community empowerment and participation; human rights monitoring; establishment of protection networks with existing local organizations; and sensitization programmes related to existing legal and administrative mechanisms. In addition, the Mission has integrated conflict management mechanisms into all its capacity-building activities. It should be noted that all human rights programmes, which have been funded voluntarily by Member States, will require more funding as they expand.

27. The Mission is implementing the second phase of the civic education and human rights training programme with the Angolan Armed Forces, targeting military instruction centres and schools where ex-UNITA combatants are receiving induction training. At the provincial level, the national police also participate in these training sessions and follow-up activities.

28. Realizing that access to justice by the reinforcement of the State administration is part of a larger peace-building approach, the Mission is working on making the projects in this area self-sustaining by a strengthened partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as other international organizations. A partnership with UNDP and the Ministry of Justice has resulted in a joint municipal justice project that aims at establishing 12 new municipal courts in the provinces. At the national level, the Mission is strengthening the institutional protection mechanisms by providing technical assistance and financial support to the Ninth Commission of the National Assembly, the Provincial Human Rights Committees of the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association, the NGO "*Mãos Livres*" and the Emergency Legal Aid project of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church.

Child protection

29. The plight of children remains grave in a context characterized by underfunded emergency assistance programmes, lack of appropriate reintegration programmes and inadequate institutional and legal protection for children. In this connection, the Mission has ensured the inclusion of relevant child protection issues on the agenda of the Joint Commission and other relevant government agencies. Furthermore, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, the Mission has identified four major areas in need of urgent action: (a) protection of war-affected and displaced

children during the reintegration phase; (b) advocacy and support for the implementation of government policies on child protection, including adequate resources for child protection programmes, legislative reforms, measures to prevent the re-recruitment of child soldiers and gender discrimination, in particular against girls, measures to address the psychological impact on war-affected children, and extension of the Government's free birth registration campaign; (c) provision of child rights training for justice administration and public officials; and (d) assistance in establishing coordinating mechanisms to monitor serious violations of child rights, promotion of information exchange on child rights and assistance with fundraising for child rights sensitization campaigns.

30. In early November, the Mission conducted the first child rights training workshop for the Provincial Human Rights Committee in Benguela. It was agreed that the Committee should support specific programmes for children traumatized by war; actively participate in the Tracing and Reunification Programme run by the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reinsertion; seek to develop its own advocacy strategy for the promotion of children's rights; and ensure that all efforts were made to avoid gender discrimination.

Mine action

31. The Government of Angola and the Inter-Sectoral Commission for Mine Action and Humanitarian Assistance are increasing coordination efforts to implement concrete steps for demining, with limited support from the United Nations. Keeping in mind the resettlement process, the need for urgent resources to expand the scope of operation of demining activity becomes ever more urgent. The international community and NGOs are also supporting planning for a landmine impact survey.

Humanitarian activities

32. The overall humanitarian situation in the country remains extremely difficult, but there has been some notable progress in meeting the needs of the Angolan people. Since June 2002, the humanitarian operation has doubled in size and more than one million people have been assisted as a result of the delivery of integrated programmes in food, nutrition, health, non-food items, water and sanitation. The humanitarian community remains focused on meeting acute emergency needs, while planning to move towards recovery and reconstruction in the coming months.

33. From 1 July to 30 August, the percentage of the population with acute malnutrition and life-threatening shortfalls in essential food and medicines declined significantly, mainly due to the massive expansion of humanitarian operations. By late September, however, malnutrition levels increased owing to the return of more than 700,000 internally displaced persons to areas where food, health and sanitation services were not yet available. In mid-October, six months after the end of hostilities, the United Nations was providing food and humanitarian assistance to 1.8 million people, a larger number than at any time during the civil war.

34. Access to previously inaccessible areas improved significantly during the reporting period. By mid-October, approximately 60 per cent of the country had become accessible to humanitarian partners, while in April 2002, only 20 per cent of the country had been accessible. The amount of humanitarian assistance delivered by air dropped from 43 to 28 per cent, reducing the overall cost of the humanitarian

operation. However, about 40 per cent of the country is still inaccessible owing to damaged infrastructure and extensive mine infestation. Sixty per cent of all main roads and about 80 per cent of all roads and airstrips are still damaged. Seven provinces are still heavily mined, and mine infestation is suspected in 50 per cent of all sites slated for returnees. Moreover, the onset of the rainy season threatens to cut off up to 40 per cent of the areas receiving humanitarian assistance, leaving over one million people without assistance and further delaying recovery and reconstruction.

35. In response to the changing situation, the Provincial Emergency Plans of Action for Resettlement and Return were drafted in June and July 2002. The plans projected the return of approximately 1,750,000 internally displaced persons in 18 provinces to their areas of origin in more than 500 locations spread over 118 municipalities in 17 provinces. Between April and August 2002, approximately 100,000 people returned to their areas of origin. In August, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs provided support to the Government's Technical Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance for the initiation of a registration database to record the return and resettlement process. By early September the rate of return had accelerated sharply, reaching a rate of 10,000 returnees per day. Of the 750,000 internally displaced persons who had resettled or returned to their areas of origin by mid-October, only 10 per cent had moved under an organized plan in accordance with the regulations of the Norms on the Resettlement of Displaced Populations. It is expected that as many as 800,000 to 900,000 people may have returned to their resettlement sites by the end of 2002. Critical humanitarian needs may emerge in at least 50 per cent of these sites, requiring a significant increase in the scope and scale of the humanitarian operation in Angola.

36. The process of humanitarian coordination continues to be extensive. At the operational level, 80 humanitarian coordination forums continue to operate in 17 provinces, bringing together 11 Government ministries and departments, 10 United Nations agencies, 100 international NGOs and 320 national NGOs. In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has convened special coordination activities aimed at producing specific outputs such as the Provincial Emergency Plans of Action for Resettlement and Return. In close consultation with the Government of Angola, national and international NGOs and donors, the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Angola was officially launched in Luanda on 26 November. About $384 million is required to enable the United Nations system in Angola to continue providing funding and complementing the Government's efforts in the areas of food security, public health, protection and education, as well as access and coordination. This is expected to be the last emergency appeal for Angola, and comes at a crucial time in the consolidation of peace.

Development activities

37. One of the challenges facing Angola is the establishment of a comprehensive national development policy framework. The United Nations Common Country Assessment was launched on 24 October, while the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan covering the period 2004-2008 is under preparation by the Angolan Government, with support from UNDP and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). These frameworks are expected to establish broad social and economic policy objectives for the resettlement and reintegration process,

with a view to longer-term development objectives that also support the achievement of the Millennium development goals.

38. An area for special consideration is the challenge of HIV/AIDS. In October, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP launched a study on the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS. A project promoting the inclusion of HIV/AIDS prevention in the school curriculum started in August, supported by UNDP together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The United Nations activities in the fight against HIV/AIDS have mainly focused at this stage on ex-combatants and internally displaced persons.

39. To reduce the impact of the main and vaccine-preventable causes of mortality of children under 5 in Angola, UNICEF has negotiated a nationwide measles vaccination campaign with the Government, which the latter has agreed to implement in April 2003. With polio eradication now within reach, strong multi-year donor support will be required to continue carrying out targeted, national, and cross-border polio campaigns until 2005.

40. Although donors have shown renewed interest in supporting recovery and development initiatives, the completion of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan is perceived by many as a prerequisite for convening an international donor's conference for Angola. Further and deeper institutional reforms are also considered important to pave the way for an agreement between the Government and donors. Clearly, the earliest redirection of expenditures by the Government towards social sectors would encourage complementary funding from the international community. In this regard, the Government of Angola has requested the United Nations to assist and support its efforts in securing additional financing for humanitarian assistance and post-conflict development in Angola by convening an international donor conference. The donor conference is tentatively scheduled for early 2003.

III. Challenges ahead

41. Many of the challenges facing Angola are a consequence of the devastation and destruction brought about by a protracted civil war which lasted for almost three decades. At the political level, a durable resolution of the conflict is linked to democratic legitimization and representation, which, in turn, will facilitate national reconciliation. In the economic and social fields, a durable solution requires efficient delivery of State services, the creation of economic opportunities for many citizens who have been marginalized for too long and the effective extension of Government and public administration. With the initiation of the Government's resettlement programme, the provision of these services is particularly critical to the welfare of a significant portion of the Angolan population.

42. It should be noted that neither the Memorandum of Commitment nor the Memorandum of Understanding addressed all of the remaining tasks under the Lusaka Protocol, including the provision by the Government and UNITA of all available information relating to the location of mines and other explosives to the United Nations; verification of the neutrality of the Angolan National Police and the disarming of all civilians; provision of guarantees of basic freedom and human rights within the national reconciliation process; and the implementation of administrative decentralization programmes. The Lusaka Protocol also foresaw the

extension of State administration throughout the country and the integration of UNITA members at all levels of Government, as well as access by all Angolans to social services in all parts of the country. As no consensus has been reached on many of these vital issues in the framework of the Joint Commission, the parties agreed to establish a bilateral mechanism, following the dissolution of the Joint Commission, to continue discussions on those issues.

43. Disarmament of the civilian population remains central to the overall enhancement and consolidation of peace and security in Angola. The concerns of Angolan civil society over this issue reflect a continuing trend of insecurity in some of the provincial and urban areas, where banditry has increased significantly. In consolidating peace and completing the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, the disarmament of the civilian population deserves urgent attention. Moreover, since Angola continues to be one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, there is an urgent need to accelerate demining activities throughout the country.

44. Full support for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially for children, is also required throughout the country. In this regard, human rights and outreach programmes should be carried out, not only in urban centres, but also in rural communities. Where applicable, international conventions should be incorporated into national law. In addition, the timely scheduling of and preparations for the election process remain a key aspect of the post-Joint Commission period. In this regard, there is a need for the earliest possible constitutional review, the issuance of identity cards, voter registration, the establishment of an independent electoral commission, and the enactment by the National Assembly of new legislation ensuring that all eligible voters are enfranchised.

45. Above all, there is now an opportunity, within the process of national reconciliation, to address the key issues of developing and enhancing a culture of widened democracy, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency. The time has also come to introduce the necessary measures in order to curb corruption and to ensure respect for individual and basic freedoms.

46. In accordance with their mandate, both components of the Mission will continue to support the comprehensive implementation of demobilization, reinsertion and resettlement programmes for ex-combatants, internally displaced people and refugees. In this connection, the military liaison officers in the Mission will continue to monitor and report on the closure of the reception areas, the implementation of social rehabilitation and reinsertion programmes and demining activities. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component of the Mission will also continue to facilitate the coordination of the humanitarian agencies, NGOs and the Government, as well as the World Bank and other donors to this process.

IV. Observations

47. After 27 years of war, there at last are real prospects for lasting peace in Angola. Over the last several months, the country has witnessed several major developments that will contribute to the process of national reconciliation. Credit for this must be given primarily to the Government of Angola and UNITA, who have both demonstrated the will and determination to end the suffering of the Angolan people and to work together towards restoring the stability and security necessary

for sustainable development. UNITA's strategic decision to abandon the military path and transform into a unified political party has played an important role in that regard and should be commended. I would also like to encourage the Government of Angola to pursue the consolidation of peace, both politically and financially. At the same time, the international community must be commended for the assistance it provided to Angola in overcoming its difficult past. In this context, due credit should also be given to the sustained effort of the entire United Nations system, which has invested and contributed so much to the cause of peace in that country.

48. The challenges facing the Angolan people, as outlined in the present report, are still considerable. It is imperative, therefore, that the United Nations and the international community continue to support the Angolan people in further consolidating peace, in the reconstruction of their country and in meeting the needs outlined recently in the consolidated inter-agency appeals process. This, in turn, must be accompanied by a strong will on the part of the Government of Angola to establish transparent and accountable governmental institutions across the board, as well as to allay any concerns its people and the donor community may have on the allocation and spending of national revenues.

49. While significant progress has been made on the political track, the major remaining challenges are in the humanitarian and developmental sectors. The Mission has effectively functioned in an integrated and coordinated manner, and with the completion of the work of the Joint Commission, I have requested my Special Representative to return to New York. While he will be visiting Angola regularly until the expiration of the Mission's mandate, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator has been designated as Deputy Special Representative for Angola and officer-in-charge of the Mission.

50. Based on the further progress which I trust will be made in the next two months, and following consultations with the Angolan Government, I intend to provide recommendations on the future role of the United Nations in Angola in my next report to the Security Council. These recommendations will reflect progress achieved to date and continuing requirements to consolidate and strengthen peace in Angola.

51. In conclusion, I wish to thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, my Special Representative for Angola, for his leadership as head of the Mission, and for bringing the work of the Joint Commission to a successful conclusion. I also wish to thank the United Nations Country Team for its commendable efforts in promoting peace and stability in Angola during this critical period. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to the "Troika" Observer States and all other States concerned, who have continued to actively support these vital efforts.